

VZCZCXRO6036
RR RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHJA #1136 1630227
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 110227Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9255
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 8458
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2089
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5127
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2632
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4667
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

UNCLAS JAKARTA 001136

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/ENRC, EAP/MTS, EAP/RSP
USTR FOR MLINSCOTT, DBROOKS
USAID FOR ANE, EGAT [CBARBER, MMELNICK]
BANGKOK FOR RDM/A

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: ARREST OF INDONESIAN TIGER TRAFFICKERS HIGHLIGHTS
CONSERVATION CHALLENGE

REF: JAKARTA 328

11. Summary. The recent arrest of four members of a tiger trading ring in North Sumatra underscores the threat facing the endangered Sumatran tiger. Although it was an example of successful cooperation between the police, forestry officials, and a locally active NGO, the arrests highlighted the wider, continuing, problem of illegal trade in wildlife throughout Sumatra. It might also reflect a shift in tiger poaching activity from southern to northern Sumatra. Other recent wildlife seizures by government officials underscore the problem. End Summary.

Tiger Trafficking Ring Busted

12. On May 23, the police in Tina Binanga, North Sumatra, in cooperation with forestry officials from the Natural Resources Conservation Center (BKSDA), arrested four suspected members of a wildlife trafficking ring. The four, one of whom is a member of the military, had a complete tiger pelt and one handgun in their possession. The officials made the arrests and seizure with information provided by an ongoing undercover Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) investigation into the illegal tiger trade. An NGO spokesman claimed that the skin -- probably poached from Gunung Leuser National Park in Aceh -- was being shipped to Medan, North Sumatra, for sale for approximately \$1400. WCS is following the case closely to try and secure prosecutions, working with local NGOs and journalists to keep the case in the media -- and public -- spotlight.

Tiger Poachers Shifting to Northern Sumatra?

13. According to a member of WCS' Wildlife Conservation Unit in Lampung Province, southern Sumatra, the May 23 arrests indicates a trend: a movement of illegal tiger traffickers from southern to northern Sumatra. Other NGOs contest this claim. However, in a recent report, TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, found no trade in tiger parts in Lampung Province, although it found tiger parts that probably totaled 23 tigers (in 2006) in other Sumatran provinces (reftel). The apparent shift in poaching activity is supported by the fact that tiger poaching cases in Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park (BBSNP) in Lampung declined from 13 in 2003 to only 1 in 2007. However, the illegal trade in wildlife continues to be widespread throughout Sumatra and other parts of Indonesia.

The Threat

14. Still, the threat is clear. One conservation NGO worker estimates that 66 Sumatran tigers have been killed in the last two

years. WCS says it has unpublished information on the apparent deaths from poaching in Aceh of 47 tigers in the period 2006-2007.

According to raw survey data that WCS is currently analyzing, there may actually have been an increase in BBSNP's tiger population. However, in Way Kambas National Park, also in Lampung Province, WCS project staff fear there has been a decline in the tiger population, probably due to poaching (reftel).

More Wildlife Seizures

15. On June 2, officials from the Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA) office in Medan arrested two more suspected traffickers and seized two dead tiger cubs. Separately, in Kota Singkawang, Kalimantan Barat, BKSDA officials seized a mixture of 6,334 green turtle and hawksbill turtle eggs (both endangered species, and protected under Indonesian law) and arrested their owner. The owner admitted he had been engaged in the egg trade for the past year, obtaining eggs from hunters on various islands in Riau Province.

HEFFERN